STIOs experience, expertise and other resources at their disposal for enhancing India's excellence and global competitiveness; strengthening institutional and human capacity; accelerating achievement of goals set out in oh-going nationally important R&D projects; enhancing entrepreneurship amongst Indian S&T personnel; and strengthening alma mater relationships.

Collaborative Project proposals were solictited in the frontier areas of science and cutting edge technologies considered critical to Indian requirements arising out of technology foresight exercises and niches expressed by Indian industries such as Drugs & Pharmaceutical R&D, Hydrocarbon R&D, Automotive R&D, Biomedical Research, Decentralized Energy Systems, Display Technogies, Transportation Systems, Materials Science & Technology, Technology Management, IPR Management, Innovation etc.

Department of Science & Technology (DST) has selected 27 collaborative projects for supporting STIO's visits into India during 2006-2007 for strengthening institutional and human capacity & accelerating achievement of goals set out in on-going nationally important research under which DST together with Indian host institutions are suporting projects based visit of STIOs into India for 2-12 week period each year.

Indian labourers in foreign Nations

†1862. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) The number of Indian citizens working as labourers only in foreign countries alongwith the names of these countries;

(b) whether all these labourers are working as per Government rules or they are being made to work against the rules also; and

(c) whether Government consider it appropriae that a labour wing should be created under the Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) and (b) Emigration clearance is granted to workers for employment abroad under the Emigration Act, 1983. During last five years

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

from 2002 to 2006, more then 25 lakhs workers have been granted emigration clearance for jobs primarily in UAE, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain Maldives, Mauritius, Jordan, etc. Instances often come to notice about violation of terms & conditions of employment by the foreign employers, which are promptly attended to by the Indian Missions concerned who take up the grievances of workers for redressal with the employers as well as the local authorities. In cases involving complaints against registered Recruiting Agents, action is taken to suspend/cancled their Registration Certificates. In cases involving illegal/unregistered Recruiting Agents, penal action is taken for violation of the provisions of the Emigration Act, 1983.

(c) A labour welfare wing with the Mission exists in most of the countries with large number of Indian emigrant workers. Many Missions have recommended strengthening of their wings.

Amendment in Indian Emigration Act

1863. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have proposed to amend the Indian Emigration Act, 1983 to enforce compliance of statutory standards by agents recruiting skilled and semi-skilled labour for placement abroad;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have plans to extend the ECNA (Emigration Check Not Required) status to more countries than presently given; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) and (b) The Government has proposed amendments to Emigration Act, 1983 for the promotion and regulation of overseas employment and the protection and welfare of the emigrants. The amendments are under finalization.

(c) and (d) The Government has already placed 173 countries under Emigration Check Not Required (ECNR) category vide notification dated 28.12.2006. As a result, emigration check is required only in respect of the following 18 countries—Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE, Kuwait, Oman,